

## **Building global nation to combat terrorism**

Capt. Joseph Coslett  
USSOCOM Public Affairs

U.S. Special Operations Command hosted special operators and military representatives from 58 countries at the first International Special Operations Forces Week June 6 through 10 in Tampa, Fla.

Historically, USSOCOM and industry partners came together to foster strong government-to-industry relationships at SOF Week and the Advanced Planning Briefing to Industry. This year's theme for the first ISOF Week is "Partners in International Security." The event focused on local and regional security issues with a collaborative and proactive stance to identify real solutions to growing security threats.

ISOF Week brings an understanding we are a global village, said Brig. Gen. Mills, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command Korea. "We have a global commitment to fight the Global War on Terrorism."

The definition of GWOT might not be the same for every country, Mills said. Terrorism is different for Iraq than it is for South Korea. "However the truth is terrorism acts against the good nature of the state or acts against humanity."

Mills explained that nations around the world can come together collectively to obtain a better understanding of the problem and conquer the threat of terrorism.

On the first day, U.S. component, theater special operations commanders and senior enlisted advisors attended the commanders conference to discuss SOF issues concerning the GWOT plan/authorities, the Global Defense Posture and the climate of each theater of operations. And, SOF operator issues were addressed, including SOF retention, SOF diversity and the SOF Care Coalition (a new program to care for the families of injured SOF members).

At the same time, the retired SOF senior leadership conference highlighted current and future activities throughout the command, including vignettes presented by operational personnel. Simultaneously, the chief executive officer conference involved discussions on future acquisition programs and opportunities. CEOs spoke with operators and USSOCOM senior leadership about how manufacturers in the civilian sector can benefit the end-user on the military side.

The second day began with the Advanced Planning Briefing to Industry, which is a two-day event for USSOCOM's industry partners. They received briefings on business opportunities, upcoming acquisitions and information on existing technology pursuits.

In the evening, the SOF Social allowed commanders, retired senior SOF leadership, senior enlisted advisors, CEOs and industries partners to interact in an unrestrictive format further building lasting relations.

"SOF Week connects manufacturers with SOCOM leadership," said Joe Daum, USSOCOM technology and industry liaison officer. "It gives our leadership exposure to the latest technology."

International events kicked off on day three at the Tampa Convention Center. During opening ceremonies, 58 international flags were posted before more than 2,000 conference participants including international SOF commanders, and past and present U.S. SOF commanders.

"Through many years of tough, persistent training, as well as through our wealth of shared experiences in coalition operations, your nations and ours have built highly trained and motivated Special Operations Forces that – together – can operate across a spectrum of operations from

pre-crisis to post-crisis,” said Gen. Doug Brown, USSOCOM commander. “We live in a global environment and now is the time to take our cooperation to a higher level.”

Following the commander’s opening remarks, guest speakers included U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William Wood; Mr. Thomas O’Connell, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict; Gen. Peter Pace, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Maj. Gen. Michael Hindmarsh, Special Operations Commander – Australia; Lt. Gen. Kun Ki Baek, commanding general of the Korean Special Warfare Command, and Mr. Thomas Friedman, New York Times Reporter and author of “The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century.”

“We are likeminded people with the same problems,” O’Connell said. The face-to-face networking will allow us to focus on trends at the regional level. In addition, coalitions and partnerships are about trust and what is needed to operate and build SOF global networks.

The same thoughts were echoed by Australian General Hindmarsh.

“Every country will have its own constraints when fighting terrorism, however, the long-term effort will build government relations to form one line of response,” he said.

Following the opening ceremonies, the international delegations visited the exhibit hall floors. More than 350 exhibits offered conference members the opportunity to talk with operators and industrial partners from around the world, and see the latest technologies being developed to secure peace.

That evening, USSOCOM leadership and international SOF took part in a tradition beginning more than a decade ago. SOF Mess Night has transformed into a global event with the goal of building and maintaining camaraderie and cohesiveness among special operators around the world.

The fourth day began with the forming of two international panels to facilitate tabletop discussions on global security.

“Terrorism is a subject today, a problem today, a challenge today and one nation, one army, one unit cannot do it by himself,” Lt. Gen. Sher Karimi said, Chief of Operations of the Afghan National Army General Staff. “To be successful against terrorism, you have to be well-trained, specially trained, particularly to fight against terrorism in the cities, and must have good intelligence training.”

Throughout the week, numerous exhibits and demonstrations were set up by operators and industry partners to educate personnel on the current operational security environment and technologies available.

“In times of crisis, many governments turn first to their special operations units,” Brown said. “Superb training, physical conditioning, specialized skills and equipment put these forces on the leading edge of the security battle.”

The week finished off when Vice President Dick Cheney visited USSOCOM. He gave remarks on defending peace during International SOF week.

“The terrorists are constantly attempting to evade our strengths and to search for our weaknesses in order to find ways to strike once again,” Cheney said. “And the greatest danger to civilization is the prospect of a terror network.

“Special ops also remind us of the global focus we need to win the battle against terror and weapons proliferation. SOCOM units have joined with special ops from almost every country represented here today, on a broad range of missions – from counter-insurgency, to counter-

narcotics, to interdiction of illicit materials, to having a ready response for the Olympic Games.

“Looking across the room, I see the diversity of our planet, but an identity of interests. None of us wants to turn over the future of mankind to tiny groups of fanatics committing indiscriminate murder and plotting large-scale horror. And so we must direct every resource necessary to defending the peace and freedom of our world, and the safety of the people we serve.”



**Mr. Thomas Friedman, New York Times reporter and author of “The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century,” addresses the International SOF Week participants on his observations on globalization as the Advanced Planning and Briefing to Industry luncheon keynote speaker. He characterizes globalization as “the (unstoppable) integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before.” Photo by Chief Petty Officer Robert Benson.**



**Maj. Gen. Pedra Felipe Gurrola, Mexican Special Operations Forces commander, hears about a new piece of equipment designed for SOF from one of the hundreds of exhibitors at the Tampa Convention Center. Photo by Chief Petty Officer Robert Benson.**



**During Special Operations Forces Mess Night Gen. Peter Pace, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, talks with a member of the Iraqi delegation at the first U.S. Special Operations Command International SOF Week. General Pace was the guest speaker at SOF Mess Night. Photo by Chief Petty Officer Robert Benson.**